Nothing Left But This Part of Me

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Nothing Left But This Part of Me

by mayinwinter

Summary

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Will would see the man close his eyes, but his mental gates would be screeching open. From his own wired station, Will would go in, he would delve into the inside of Lecter’s brain, and he knew their fingers would tremble and lips would bleed. Even in the realm of immaterial thoughts, this kind of delving had an inescapable physicality.

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William Graham is one of the best when it comes to immersing in the thoughts of others, because his empathy and sheer obstinance grant him a dangerous ability to manipulate neural connection technology. Hannibal Lecter used to be his friend and unofficial psychiatrist, until...well. He is a cannibal of minds and a murderer, and he is in prison for it. There is a growing interest in harnessing Lecter's mind, which doesn't seem like a good idea. Cue Will to the rescue. Or so Will is made to believe. Hello again, all.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

<Graham had a lot of trouble with taste. Often his thoughts were not tasty. There were no effective partitions in his mind.

What he saw and learned touched everything else he knew. Some of the combinations were hard to live with. But he could not anticipate them, could not block and repress.

His learned values of decency and propriety tagged along, shocked at his associations, appalled at his dreams.

Sorry that in the bone arena of his skull there were no forts for what he loved.>

Red Dragon, Thomas Harris.

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"It is a mercy, to not share this part of myself with you".

Will's barely-there smile was a touch sardonic, as he did not feel the need to curve his reaction at those words. The man behind the prison barriers was, after all, familiar with his facial expressions, his tics and tells in a sense. The man had even once told him that 'words had a particular way to shape his mouth instead of the other way around'.

The doctor and him, it was a horror anecdote for the halls of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and of the Bureau of the Mind both.

"Your arrogance is a bit unnecessary, Doctor. And it can blind you. You still think you are so above everyone else, that whatever painful thoughts you have, is beyond what I have seen before. There must be something gruesome in your lif6e, or, I guess there was, back when it was a breaking point of sorts in your mental development. This conclusion is almost a given, with you and your kind".

A hmmm sound came from behind the barrier, the most polite way the other man had, to gallantly announce a verbal interruption.

"My kind. What is my kind, do you know, Will?"

"Your kind, the delusional, the self-centered. Don't try to distract me from the point, Doctor. The things I've seen and felt, you have a good idea, of course. I let you see a lot of me. But how can you even possibly begin to imagine you could have seen everything? I've virtually been all manners of victims, alive and dead. And you know that I have seen…that I have been all manners of criminals, too. The ones that feel guiltless, or frightened, even those schizophrenic-"

Of a sudden, Will clicked his teeth together, stopping. He recognized this pattern. In their shared past, usually Hannibal Lecter would be able to make him follow a conversation, even if he did so reluctantly.

But now, Will did not need to justify himself. If he continued to be in Lecter's presence, it would only kindle the fire of his own resentment, past memories of all the forced dealings with madmen. He had one thing to do here, now, talking with the most frustrating prisoner of the Mind Ward, he could not afford to make this long.

"Is that particularly difficult for you, to be met by different personalities in one mind?"

For his part, the doctor seemed calm and deceptively polite, as usual. His inquiry had the same tone of scientific interest, detached but soothing, that Will knew well. Lecter and his waltz. As if Will himself had not gone through these steps before.

"You're still evading, Doctor. Don't lie to yourself, because you're not fooling me. This is not an offer of mercy you are extending me by refusing me access to your mind. This is fear, from you. Typical, that you'd be afraid of yourself".

Lecter gave him a long glance, paused, meditative.

Will wondered whatever purpose of manipulation this pause was meant to advance. Was the doctor intending to make him think the next words would be burdened with feeling? With honesty? Or to reinforce the impression that he could turn Will's sharp words towards a different target, just by the sheer will of his strange eyes?

"What you say is not untrue in its entirety, William. Some aspects of the self remain less than comfortable and more carefully guarded, not by their capacity to instill fear only. Fear in itself is a stage in a series of steps, and sometimes going back and forth through the steps becomes necessary. Nevertheless; fear is much too simplistic an answer".

"Fear is a usually considered paralytic in circumstances of duress".

"To some, indeed. To others, it is the equivalent of an uncontrollable impulse to act. You yourself have not the most standard reactions to fear, dear Will".

"Granted, that, but still veering away from what I've come for. I am not here just to entertain you, Doctor. I will entertain you, of course, for a price. What I want is that price. Let me in. So far, we've established you fear to see back into what lies in the foundations of your destructive impulses, and more expressly you do not want to let anyone observe."

The other man stared, a minuscule tilt of his head to the side. A gesture Will had seen, but that could telegraph any number of meanings from Lecter. So Will let the pause stretch, waiting to see if a fire-rapid rhythm would take over their talk, but a moment later he continued, because things needed to be clear and brutal.

"The first reason I don't care about, be afraid or not, I am sure you can deal with that. The second reason we can negotiate. If you don't want to let me see to keep some air mystery to you, you can try that with others, but not me. You know that anything you have inside your mind, I've seen somewhere else before. And if you don't want to let me see because you want something in return, then name it, Doctor. You know I am not here because I want, so that means I've got some pretty solid names backing me up here. It's disgusting, really, but we know that's how this works".

Will let his lips twist, something mercenary, himself testing the waters with this move. It was graceless and vicious, and he was sure Lecter would feel offended to be bartered with in such a cheap way. But any ground gained, through coercion or irritation or charm, anything at all when it came to dealing with Lecter could meant an inch closer to honest words. And honest words could mean to get a grudging or even arrogant agreement.

If Lecter agreed to this, Will could start to imagine the preparations. Lecter would be taken to the navigation room, he would be placed in the restraints, and only his head would be allowed movement, in order to let him nod, a tilt to the left, the standard invitation for mind connection. Will would see the man close his eyes, but his mental gates would be screeching open. From his own wired station, Will would go in, he would delve into the inside of Lecter's brain, and he knew their fingers would tremble and lips would bleed. Even in the realm of immaterial thoughts, this kind of delving had an inescapable physicality.

But so far, the other man didn't appear ruffled or particularly interested in the offer, or rejection of it. Still the oily grace of distance and that Otherness around him, even after years of his captivity.

"I do not believe you, Will, forgive me for saying so in this frank a manner".

"You don't believe I can keep my word in an offer? I know you've been made those before, that they've tried to dupe you. I am not that stupid. I'll be explicit in the arran-"

Lecter's eyes had shifted, minutely, to the right. It was less than a fraction of a movement, but Will could see it, and he halted his own words. Lecter's regard of him and minimum interest in this particular conversation was waning fast. And it seemed Will's interruption had not been well received either. He knew that he was a second away from being dismissed as so much noise, even if this encounter of theirs was a high rarity.

The man behind the tempered glass panels and fine webs of lettered threads resumed, ignoring the accumulating tension between them.

"I do not believe you, Will, when you say you care not for what you term the first reason of my refusal, my apparent fear to phrenakhartes immersion".

"And I don't mean to cut in when you're finally talking and all, Doctor, but you know we're not talking garden variety immersion. We're not talking pure empathy projection. I am talking infraego walk, host-host cognitive experience after the immersion. No belts on. Not for you, at least. I'll need to prepare a lot and have safe guards in place, I am not ashamed to acknowledge that. If you're not fully aware and fully consenting, I'll risk us both a good deal of mental damage. I haven't signed for that".

Lecter blinked at him.

"Dear William, I would have you acknowledge that is precisely what you have signed for. Are you being purposefully obtuse? Please do not continue to do so, it is disingenuous of you".

Will knew he was being baited, but he couldn't help his reply.

“Such an unbelievable ego on you, Dr. Lecter. I know what I can do, I have been doing it in far less safer conditions that the ones you and I are now. You know some of it. Don’t pretend that you know the entirety of it. And don’t try to masquerade it as concern for both of us. If you could lure me in, you would do it in a-“

Again, Will stopped. He had to remind himself of his hard-earned lessons, when it came to the manipulations of this man. He swallowed discreetly, licking his lips without breaking focus on the prisoner’s impassive face.

“Is that what you’re doing, Doctor? Playing hard to get? Softening my conscious considerations towards your psyche before opening the gates with a smile? You think that once I am inside, you’ll be able to control me, or the shapes of the khartes? What a sp-“

Lecter’s eyes were intense and hard on Will’s face, even if he appeared to have not gesticulated at all. But then again, Will also knew his tics and tells, the set of the man’s lips clear sign that his incoming words would be another negative.

“Enough, then. You have talked yourself into many suppositions that are as plausible as they are not. This is my final word on it, William. Formal Inquisitor. No”.

Will managed to hide his disgust at the mention of his current forced status. The use of the title was sour in the air around them, and the feeling didn’t emerge from Lecter’s regard but from Will himself. It was heavy and sour to him. But he had committed to this, and Will would see it through to all its possible attempts.

“It’s not a matter of asking you. This will be done, somehow. The matter here is how to force your consent, Doctor Lecter”.

“There is no forcing it, Will”.

“There will be. And you’ll want it to be me. There was a time when we played our mental games, a time even when you would think to teach me pathways and I would construct intricate readings with you, not only when it came to cases with Jack. I mean, in our conversations, we had that. I will never again be that naïve or disingenuous, to use your terms, but even if neither of us want to do this, it can be… not so terrible”.

The older man had retreated to his desk and his chair, his eyes no longer available.

“To use your words said to me some time ago, William, the light of such exchanges cannot reach us again for what amounts to be a million years. And my negative needs not to be so discouraging in itself. Subtract from it import, place it away, as it was before. It needs not to change things, but for the better. Stop working for the bureaus. Renounce to performing inquisitions. Move on. And if possible, visit me again sometime. It would so please me”.

Will stood there for what felt were hours, his eyes demanding a return of the attention from the murderer who had been once his support and his friend. But he knew well the topic was closed, as permanently as the man was stubborn and maddeningly hermetic. Will’s mind was, in seconds, constructing several arguments to continue this talk, some rational and some

poisonous, worthy of Lecter himself and his penchant to stroke over weaknesses in order to manipulate people into dubious situations.

But his empathy hollered finality at him. So Will turned around, and walked away without looking back.

He didn't know what the reaction of the FBI and the BM would be to his failure. But, well.

He had already told them it would be a failed attempt. Will had been strong-armed into this, and he was almost glad to be done with it without even starting.

As he made his exit from the heavily guarded institute, blandly called the Mind Ward for obvious camouflaging purposes, Will felt annoyance bubbling up inside.

Of course goddamn Hannibal Lecter, killer of fucking many and consumer of even more minds, would be the one insistent on Will's own welfare. Of course he would be the only one with such categorical vehemence of Will quitting the job that almost cost him his mind.

Will swore loudly, and drove away.

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After that, one year and seven months passed, until he was recalled to the Bureau of the Mind, on grounds of priority need for containment of high risk mind crimes.

Those were a bunch of fancy words, used to present him with the much hated badge of the Inquisitors duty again. And Will would have let out a barrel of well-rehearsed rebuttals, but the file placed in front of him was marked with bolded black numbers: B1329-0.

It was the prison code for his own fucking celebrity murderer.

In the pages within the inconspicuous folder, the data was chaos: someone had taken Lecter, and made him disappear.

Someone somewhere high enough, had authorized to take Lecter, a high risk prisoner with undiagnosed capacity for mental spectrum distortion, to an undisclosed location. They had taken Lecter, and the heavy and sophisticated khartesforte machinery. It had all been done quickly, and it seemed whoever wanted to benefit from illegal immersion in the man's head had been sure they had planned for all eventuality.

Will frowned. Of course everything had gone to Hell.

The transport carrying the prisoner had been lost, as lost was too the communication with the mobiles and trackers of the teams in charge. This had happened two weeks prior to the deicision of calling Will in, as if he was a freaking wild joker card.

They suspected someone inside the team had decided to take over the secret operation, and based on that, the Bureau had three labs as possible holding locations. But whatever stage those people had achieved within Lecter's head was still unsure. No one knew anything anymore, all were trying to sweep the blame under a metaphorical rug of bullshit.

Will put down the file, and took a decision.

He wanted nothing to do with this.

End Notes

Funny situation: I have never watched Inception, or The Cell, or Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, or any other well-known movie that develops a world of mind control, or dream control, or thought control. I know of them, but only some vague idea. I have watched Paprika, though. I won't draw heavily from it, but there's inspiration that must be credited.

In other words: welcome to this story where everything is made up and the points don't matter.

Having said that, I will make efforts towards logic and consistency. Feel free to help me out, guys. The story line is set, but Hannibal Lecter would be proud of us in our ability to adapt.

There will be bitter interactions between our main players, but as usual, this does not cancel out the attraction. There will be other familiar faces appearing here too, whether they are in the flesh or as immaterial embodiments. I don't think it will be easy to tell who is flesh and who is mind-creation, though.

Anyways, if inclined, come say hello at http://mayinwinter.tumblr.com/

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